

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 1, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Over the past several weeks, at your direction, Vice President Biden has led a series of meetings between members of your administration and Members of Congress to address our nation's crippling deficits and our \$14.3 trillion debt limit. News reports indicate that participants discussed a variety of specific proposals, and Vice President Biden recently explained that the group's work had reached a point where only your involvement could conclude the process and bring about an agreement.

American taxpayers have a right to know what vision their leaders have for the size of their government and the levels of taxation desired to fund that government. Unfortunately, this information is being kept a secret as part of the closed-door negotiations. We respectfully request that you provide us, in detail, the most recent version of the proposals that were discussed, including a list of any tax increases for which the White House reportedly advocated.

We are told that, on August 2nd, the Treasury Department will exhaust all measures to prevent the country from defaulting on contractually-obligated payments. Therefore, it is important that we receive this information as soon as possible. The Congressional Budget Office needs time to review and analyze the proposals that were discussed, and the Budget and Finance Committees need to be able to hold hearings to weigh the plans' budgetary and fiscal impact. Most importantly, the American public needs time to review proposals that could dramatically affect the future of this country.

Too often, we've heard promises of cutting spending and fiscal reform that have been empty and filled with gimmicks. That cannot happen again. A last-minute deal, delivered under the threat of panic, will not be acceptable. While we may disagree about how best to confront our deficits, or on how severe and immediate a threat they pose, we can surely agree that the American people deserve time to study the decisions their leaders are making on their behalf. We look forward to your prompt consideration of our request, and welcome any questions you may have.

Very truly yours,




